

SJ Learns Request for Proposals FAQ

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SJ Learns July 1 Informational Conference Call

Questions and Answers

1. Why was the RFP delayed and what will be the new deadline? What is the new timeline? Is there a new deadline for the applications due to delay in RFP

The delay in launching the RFP by Silicon Valley Community Foundation is due only to contractual issues that remain to be defined with the City of San Jose. The main points are as follows:

- The nature of these differences in no way alters the substance of the RFP. There are no changes to the Initiative Strategy, Proposal Eligibility Criteria, Project Proposal Characteristics, or Award Amounts, as defined in the RFP approved by the SJ Learns Working Group (attached).
- The final RFP document, when it is launched may require a slight change to the Review and Selection Process with respect to the City's role.
- It is likely that the names of the Working Group and Advisory Group members may not appear in the online RFP.
- A team of City and SVCF staff are working diligently to finalize the contract and RFP which should be completed within 7 to 10 business days.
- The timeline will be pushed forward to reflect the number of days of delay.

2. What is the exact application process? Who makes the decision about funding?

Once launched, the application process will be as follows:

- SVCF is hosting the SJ Learns RFP Website and a launch announcement will include the link to it.
- Subject to the potential changes as listed above, the RFP document will be posted on the website.
- Interested applicants will click on the "Apply" button and this will take them to the application page where the proposal questions are listed, as are the documentation requirements. While these questions and requirements have already been defined, I am prohibited by City policy to release them until the launch date.
- Proposals will be submitted via SVCF's online system.
- SVCF staff will perform all due diligence and present the SJ Learns Advisory Committee with recommendations accompanied by analysis of all proposals, including those not recommended. How the City does or does not participate here remains a question.

2. Please recap the key goals for SJ Learns (Initiative Strategy).

- Enable substantial gains in reading and mathematics among San José K – third-grade students from low-income families through an Initiative that allows for flexibility and encourages innovation.
- Provide additional resources to school districts to increase the number of children from low-income San José communities attending quality extended-learning programs during the school year that support academic goals and provide enrichment opportunities.
- Leverage public funding with matching commitments from participating grantees for an initial program and from corporate, philanthropic and public sector partners to substantially expand access and opportunity through a continuing Initiative.

- Facilitate dialogue and learning among participating districts and the broader extended learning community to inform practice and policy, including strategies to scale successful programs and build sustainable funding streams.

3. Can multiple organizations partner on a proposal? Any limitations (Eligibility Criteria)?

- Proposals from school districts, charter school networks or established elementary school coalitions, fulfilling the following criteria will be considered:
 - Serve K – 3 students in the city of San José.
 - Have approved, Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAP) in place that include:
 - Support for students who are below grade level, English-learners or at-risk with the goal of making accelerated progress toward grade level proficiency;
 - Extended-learning programs during the school year as a key strategy or activity for improving student academic achievement in reading and/or mathematics;
 - Specific, dedicated funding for extended learning programs during the school year as matching funds that total at least 50% of the amount requested in the proposal.
 - Are able to report on student improvements in proficiency in reading and mathematics for all students and on quality improvement over the course of the program.
 - Demonstrate adoption or intent to adopt an evidence-based and field-tested quality assessment framework.

4. Please elaborate on the \$.50 matching. Is this only cash or can it be in-kind?

- For every \$1 requested in the applicant’s proposal for SJ Learns Funding, the applicant must identify an additional \$0.50 specifically designated to the proposed project. For example if the proposed project costs a total of \$300,000, the request to SJ Learns would be \$200,000 with \$100,000 in matching funds from the applicant.
- Cash.

5. Quality v/s cost: Is there a cap on the cost per student? Proposal Evaluation Criteria)

- Detailed budget demonstrating:
 - Matching funds of a minimum of \$0.50 of identified funding for each \$1.00 requested;
 - A maximum from City funds requested of 10% for planning and/or evaluation;
 - Per-student implementation costs within District standards.

6. What is the start date for the after school program (listed as January, 2016 earlier)? Could we start sooner if we wanted to?

- Provide a detailed description of a two-year program that is aligned with the K – 3 reading and mathematics priorities as indicated in this RFP for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years that can include an initial planning and/or ramp-up period and minimum three-semester implementation period.

7. Will multiple grants be given? Any limitations on amount, number, etc?

- \$250,000 - \$500,000 per school district, charter school network or established elementary school collaborative.

- Total: \$1.7M
- Balance of \$300K: Convening; initiative evaluation and reporting; sustainability strategies; documentation.

8. What accountability measures are there? Are there any specific requirements or expectations regarding program evaluation?

- Accountability will be expected in project implementation adoption and implementation of quality assessment tools.
- Annual reports will be required. The reporting questions have been designed, but City policy forbids me from releasing them prior to the RFP Launch.
- Participation in SJ Learns three Grantee Cohort Convenings over the two-year period and two conference calls.
- Are able to report on student improvements in proficiency in reading and mathematics for all students and on quality improvement over the course of the program.
- Demonstrate adoption or intent to adopt an evidence-based and field-tested quality assessment framework. And report on outcomes.
- SVCF will prepare an aggregated report.
- The City will evaluate the initiative.

9. If the pilot program goes well, will the city help continuing/sustaining it?

- San José's after-school homework centers of a decade ago provide a foundation for the City's engagement in supporting quality, school-based programs that extend learning after-school hours in ways that foster successful learners.
- This project will need to demonstrate that the investment of City dollars in extended learning is meaningful: Increasing the number of children served, especially those who need it most; leverages "other" dollars; yields results in improved proficiency; spurs innovation and shares learnings.

10. Can we access the research that the working group had?

- Yes. We will work on putting a packet together and making it available.

11. Can we access the research that the working group had?

- Yes. We will work on putting a packet together and making it available
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12. Is the grant award for one or two years?

- 2 years

SJ Learns: Guidance on RFP Terms

Updated July 21, 2015

Under Proposal Eligibility Criteria, page 4: “Serve K – 3 Students in the city of San Jose”

Additional Guidelines on the grade-levels eligible for funding defines “**Kindergarten**” as including Transitional Kindergarten (TK). TK is the first year of a two-year kindergarten program that all school districts in California are mandated to offer as of the 2015-16 school year for children who have his or her fifth birthday between September 2 and December 2.

Under Proposal Evaluation Criteria, page 5: “Detailed budget demonstrating...per student implementation costs within district standards.”

Additional Guidelines on “**District Standards**” for cost per student per day sets a minimum baseline funding of \$7.50 per student per 3-hour after-school day (based on current state and federal funding legislation for before, after school and summer programming). While research demonstrates that this number is significantly less than what a quality program requires, there is no consensus on what a maximum cost per student per day might be. Keeping in mind that costs per student must be realistic in order to sustain and scale programs over time, applicants of SJ Learns funding are encouraged to explore the cost/quality tradeoff, with the maximum rate set at no more than 150% of the minimum baseline (note: this would be no more than \$11.25) of the baseline funding established for publicly funded programs.

SJ Learns July 28, 2015 RFP Informational Conference Call

Questions and Answers

1. Can the matching funds come from any source of funding (i.e. fundraising, foundation, corporate, etc.)?

There is no restriction on the sources of funding (corporate, foundation, state). The match must be a cash match—not in-kind.

- For example, if you present a project with a total cost of \$300,000, the budget request to SJ Learns would be \$200,000 and the District Match would be \$100,000.
- Administrative expenses, to the degree that they are budgeted can also be included and matched.

3. What is the maximum amount for a request?

The maximum amount for a request is \$500,000.

4. Is there a suggested amount of funding per student that is desired?

Under Proposal Evaluation Criteria, page 5: “Detailed budget demonstrating...per student implementation costs within district standards.”

- Additional Guidelines on “District Standards” for cost per student per day sets a minimum baseline funding of \$7.50 per student per 3-hour after-school day (based on current state and federal funding legislation for before, after school and summer programming). While research demonstrates that this number is significantly less than what a quality program requires, there is no consensus on what a maximum cost per student per day might be. Keeping in mind that costs per student must be realistic in order to sustain and scale programs over time, applicants of SJ Learns funding are encouraged to explore the cost/quality tradeoff, with the maximum rate set at no more than 150% of the minimum baseline (note: this would be no more than \$11.25) of the baseline funding established for publicly funded programs.

5. What are the requirements for the grant?

Requirements for the grant can be found on the RFP document, under the Project Proposal Characteristics section, which has also been included here:

We will consider proposals for high-quality extended learning programs that happen after the school day and incorporate the following characteristics:

- Provide a detailed description of a two-year program that is aligned with the K – 3 reading and mathematics priorities as indicated in this RFP for the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years. Programs can include an initial planning and/or ramp-up period and minimum three-semester implementation period.
- Demonstrate net gains in the number of participating students as a result of the funding requested.
- Preference will be given to proposals with an implementation strategy that allocates resources where they are most needed to increase student proficiency in reading and/or mathematics.
- Exhibit leadership from district, charter network or coalition office for collaboration with school sites and service providers in developing the program design and implementation strategy.
- Demonstrate programming that is research- and evidence-based; align extended learning curriculum with in-school learning; and incorporate innovative strategies that promote students’ active engagement in hands-on learning.

- Ensure the implementation of best practice in program design, as well as field-tested quality assessment tools that will positively impact proficiency in reading and mathematics.
- Demonstrate potential for scaling up and replication across district school sites.
- Incorporate rigorous monitoring and evaluation methods with capacity to measure changes in academic proficiency.
- Focus on developing key 21st century skills (communication, critical thinking, collaboration and creativity).
- Incorporate strategies that increase the relevance of learning through real-life applications.
- Engage with school staff, parents, and service providers to design and deliver programs that provide 10 to 15 hours per week of extended learning time and require students' daily attendance.
- Demonstrate commitment to share promising practices with districts and community partners funded by the SJ Learns Extended Learning Initiative.

6. Can anyone apply?

Any school district, charter school network, or established school coalitions that meet the following eligibility criteria from the RFP can apply for a grant.

- Serve K – 3 students in the city of San José.
- Have approved Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAP) in place that include:
 - Support for students who are below grade level, English-learners or at-risk, with the goal of making accelerated progress toward grade level proficiency;
 - Extended-learning programs during the school year as a key strategy or activity for improving student academic achievement in reading and/or mathematics;
 - Specific, dedicated funding for extended-learning programs during the school year. These matching funds must equal at least 50 percent of the amount requested in the proposal.
- Are able to report on student improvements in proficiency in reading and mathematics for all students and on quality improvement over the course of the program.
- Demonstrate adoption or intent to adopt an evidence-based and field-tested quality assessment framework.
- Proposals from religious institutions will not be accepted.

7. How do we apply?

Through Silicon Valley Community Foundation's website, at <http://www.siliconvalleycf.org/other-funding-opportunities>.

8. Is there interest for garden based education programs?

There is no specific preference for any particular methodology or approach except for what is described in the RFP.

SJ Learns Questions and Answers

Received / Response via email as of July 27, 2015

1. Is Transitional Kindergarten (TK) included in the eligibility requirements of the RFP?

Yes. Transitional Kindergarten is eligible for funding through SJ Learns.

- *From SJ Learns Guidance on RFP Terms document:* Additional Guidelines on the grade-levels eligible for funding defines “Kindergarten” as including Transitional Kindergarten (TK). TK is the first year of a two-year kindergarten program that all school districts in California are mandated to offer as of the 2015-16 school year for children who have his or her fifth birthday between September 2 and December 2.

2. Can we (district) utilize existing funds (administrative 15%) to help with that match?

The Match must be a cash match—not in kind. There is no restriction on the sources of funding.

- For example, if you present a project with a total cost of \$300,000, the budget request to SJ Learns would be \$200,000 and the District Match would be \$100,000.
- Administrative expenses, to the degree that they are budgeted can also be included and matched.

Received / Response via email as of August 8, 2015

1. This is a two year proposal, but can we use the entire grant money in the first year?

Second bullet, second sentence under Project Proposal Characteristics says: “Programs can include an initial planning and/or ramp-up period and minimum three-semester implementation period.”

2. The RFP says 10-15 additional hours per week for extended learning. Is this correct? Can the hours be spread among different students, or is it the same students?

The second to last bullet under Project Proposal Characteristics says “...and provide 10 to 15 hours per week of extended learning time and require student daily attendance.” The hourly requirement is per student.

3. You mentioned on the phone that districts cannot "double dip". If Evergreen School District submits its own proposal, does this mean that the East Side Alliance cannot include Evergreen School District in its proposal? Evergreen is a member of the ESA, and so I'm just clarifying.

You are correct. If Evergreen School District submits its own proposal, Evergreen School District cannot be included in the East Side Alliance proposal.